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ABSTRACT

To address minority students' needs, increase school administrators' instructional leadership capacities, and involve parents in improving schools, school districts must recruit large percentages of women and minority educators to school leadership positions. This will not be a simple task, as entirely new definitions of school leadership are needed. Educators are being challenged to (1) find ways to keep at-risk students in school; (2) create stimulating learning environments; and (3) garner community support. Women are still underrepresented in school leadership, and minorities have not benefited from affirmative action and other equality-based legislation. The dominant reform proposals are flawed for not promoting equity, for failing to involve black educators in reform discussions, and failing to propose measures ensuring minorities' access to school leadership positions. What is needed is a reconceptualization of school leadership and active recruitment of women and minority school leaders. Education's legitimacy crisis will not be solved by putting black faces and skirts on the same old kind of leadership. When women and minorities are trained to fit into the administrative culture, they are often programmed to forget valuable attributes, qualities, and values. Intelligent, motivated educators are more likely to leave the profession, rather than alter their identities to suit white male leadership norms. Specific structural changes are necessary to achieve equity and quality in school leadership. (84 references) (MLH)

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Position Paper for the National Policy

Board for Educational Administration

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# More than Black Face and Skirts:

# New Leadership to Confront the Major Dilemmas in Education

What can be done to address the needs of the rising number of minority children in schools? To increase the "instructional leadership" capacities of our school leaders? To involve teachers, parents and community members in helping improve schools? How can we work toward making our schools more equitable while, at the same time, raising the quality of the teaching-learning tasks? The answer is simple: recruit and promote large percentages of women and minority educators to school leadership positions. The methods are not simple. We must do more than just putting on black face or skirts. New definitions of school leadership are needed. The logic of this assertion is presented below.

## A Legitimacy Crisis

Educators and the institution of public schooling were losing legitimacy before A Nation At Risk (Boyd, 1983, 1987). Parents were sending children to private schools: Teenagers were dropping out, seeing little evidence that the goal of being a

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literate and learned citizen in a democracy was attainable. Fourteen year-olds were viewing pregnancy or the life in the drug culture as immediately rewarding. Minority children entering school saw scant evidence that "their kind" could gain status, comfort, and leadership by persevering in school. Young girls subconsciously learned a subordinate status by living in schools where women were teachers and men were the leaders. Few citizens bothered to stay informed about school politics, to vote in school board elections, or to even attend parent nights. Instead, they had withdrawn support by defeating bond issues and supporting ceilings on school expenditures. Increasingly, the "best and brightest" college students steered away from choosing the teaching profession (Schlechty and Vance, 1981; Roberson, Keith & Page, 1982).

Now and in the future, educators face the following challenges:

1. the need to find ways to keep "at-risk" students in school and learning, instead of dropping out for minimum wage jobs, early parenthood, and/or a continuation of the hopeless cycle of poverty, crime, welfare, substance abuse;
2. the need to create learning environments that stimulate and sustain students to become active learners working to their capacity;
3. the need to create communities of support for learning--alliances among parents, educators, and community members whose involvement is welcomed and real;

4. the need to create learning environments that enhance individuals' development regardless of their ethnic background.

Traditional assumptions about school organization and leadership have failed to meet these challenges. By replacing retiring school administrators with women and minority administrative candidates,[1] school systems will take a bold innovative step toward school leadership with the capacity to meet the current and future challenges.

## The Equity Argument

Affirmative action is a program that has clearly failed and recent indications from Washington indicate that relaxing of these standards is imminent. (Hughes, 1988)

Women are still underrepresented in school leadership (Timpano, 1986; Marshall, 1981; Stansbury, Thomas, & Wiggins, 1984; Tetreault & Schmuck, 1985). The 1988 report of the Educational Research Service indicates that women held only 20 percent of the elementary principalships in 1987. In 1985, women filled only 2 percent of superintendencies, 25.21 percent of elementary principalships, 8.4 percent of secondary principalships; the total percentage of women in administrative positions had declined from 35 percent in 1973 to 26 percent in 1985 (Jones and Montenegro, 1985).

Minorities have not benefited from affirmative action and other equality-based legislation. Blacks were actually hurt by integration when the segregated systems were merged and subsequently managed by whites (James, 1971; Jones & Montenegro,

1983; Valverde & Brown, 1988). For example, in 1964, the state of Virginia employed 107 black principals, compared to only 10 in 1970 (Jones & Montenegro, 1983).

In 1984-85, 9.8 percent of principals were black, 5.1 were Hispanic, 1.6 percent were of Asian or Pacific Islands descent, and 0.2 percent were of American Indian descent (Jones & Montenegro, 1985).[2] In 1978, minority men occupied 13.8 percent and minority women occupied 5.4 percent of the assistant principalships (EEOC, 1978).[3] It must be remembered that any gains that occurred for minorities occurred in a time when the number of administrative positions doubled and that increases for blacks in northeastern urban areas and Hispanics in southwestern districts swell the numbers, hiding declines in the southern and border states (Valverde and Brown, 1988).

Today minority administrators are likely to be principals of large schools having at least a 20% minority student population (Lovelady-Dawson, 1981). Although minority principals are well-educated, hold the necessary professional credentials, and have considerable classroom teaching experience, they acquire their administrative positions more slowly than their white counterparts (Doughty, 1980; Ortiz, 1982).

In some cases, women administrators may be accepted by their peers and may even become a part of the "old boys network" because they have become "acculturated." Taking on values and behaviors that fit with traditional educational administration career norms, they themselves may be washing out or undermining leadership qualities that are valuable. The price paid for socialization is, inevitably, conformity. Women's ways of

knowing, valuing, acting and interacting have much to offer as alternative, atypical modes for enacting leadership. Women "fitting in" with traditional definitions of leadership constitutes a loss. Moreover, the acculturation of minority administrators (rather than being assimilated for their unique cultural diversity) (Valverde, 1980) results in a blending into the administrative ranks, a loss of individuality, and a sacrifice of their unique ethnic perspective. Simply arguing for adding black faces and skirts is also faulty.

The Argument for Instructional Leadership

The dominant motif in the 1980s discussion of school administration was the cry for "instructional leadership," a set of tasks and attitudes carried out in "effective schools" (Brookover and Lezotte, 1979; Austin, 1979; Kean, 1982; Doll, 1967; Coulson, 1977; DeGuire, 1980; Clancy, 1982; Felsenthal, 1982; Edmonds and Frederickson, 1978). Generally these studies showed principals' leadership to be critical in creating a climate that supported enhanced achievement for students, where principals were managers of instruction, eschewing the traditional emphasis on bureaucratic control. Principal "instructional leadership," tasks and values include regular monitoring of achievement, implementing faculty improvement programs, regular involvement in curriculum planning and decisionmaking, participation in classroom activities, and regular classroom observations.

We can identify a group of people who are, according to research, excellent in and favorably oriented toward carrying out

these instructional leadership behaviors, and to do it with more than usual teacher and community input. They are the women in teaching with years of experience in instruction.

While studies show women to be as competent as men (Adkison, 1981; Shakeshaft, 1987; Ortiz and Marshall, 1988) some studies find interesting differences between male and female administrators. Women who move into school administration have spent more years as teachers than men (Ortiz, 1982; Schmuck, 1981; Prolman, 1982). Women are less likely than men to plan their careers in education with the goal of leaving tasks revolving around instruction and children (Paddock, 1981; Stockard and Johnson, 1981; Biklen, 1985). These facts partly reflect the mobility systems' inequities. Nonetheless the product of this same reality is that we have people with the ability in instructional matters in the schools right now.

Gross and Trask (1976) found women administrators' college performance was superior to males'. Hemphill, Griffiths, and Fredericksen (1962) demonstrated that women elementary principals were more likely to have high ratings from superiors on knowledge of instruction, that women were more likely to involve subordinates in discussions of school problems, women principals were preferred by both teachers and superiors; women tended to exchange information, maintain organizational relationships, and respond to outsiders more than men.

Morsink (1968) found that male elementary principals allowed teachers more freedom but women were better at speaking to faculty as a group, at reconciling conflicting demands and resolving intergroup conflict, establishing cordial relationships

with and influencing superiors, and upholding order and predicting outcomes, according to teachers' perceptions.

Fishel and Potter (1975), Adkison (1981) and Ortiz and Marshall (1988) and Shakeshaft (1987) reviewed the literature on women in school administration and found a consistent pattern: 1) women exert more positive efforts on instructional supervision, 2) women produce more positive interactions with community and staff, 3) women's administrative styles tend to be more democratic, inclusive, and conflict-reducing, 4) women secondary principals engage in more cooperative planning, 5) women elementary principals observe teachers more frequently, 6) women superintendents tour the schools more, 7) women principals and superintendents spend more time in the classroom and in discussions with teachers about instruction and the academic content of the school.

Newly conceptualized research asks "how can we enhance our understanding of leadership by studying women's experience as leaders?" Notice the emphasis on valuing women's experience rather than searching for the ways that women need to change in order to fit in. Interesting and promising leads indicate that women school administrators 1) are less concerned about bureaucracy (Bell and Chase, 1989), 2) are more inclined to want to spend energy on instructional matters, 3) spend time (and unrewarded activity) on counseling and reducing conflict (Mitchell, 1987) 4) take more work home, spend more time in schools and monitoring instructional programs, and while they do devote themselves to management tasks, they would prefer to

devote more attention to curriculum and instruction than their male counterparts. (Estler & Carr, 1988)

Finally, social psychologists and sociolinguists suggest that women's decisionmaking is more oriented toward caring for everyone (Gilligan, 1982) and that women's ways of speaking, while less assertive and authoritarian, include more listening (Dunlap, 1989) and have the effect of eliciting input and participation in groups (see Marshall, 1988 for expansion of this argument).

Such differences would, presumably, favor women's ascendance in an era of school leadership emphasizing instructional leadership and an openness to teachers' involvement in designing the work of schools. In this era of participatory management, teacher empowerment, and instructional leadership, women's leadership should be recruited and supported. But women are not taking over school administration.

## The Argument for Minority Leadership

According to demographic projections, in the year 2010, there will be thirteen states plus D.C. with more than 40 percent of their students from minority backgrounds (Hodgkinson, 1989). In the year 2000, "the rates at which black and Hispanic students complete high school will remain behind that for white students .... More than 30 percent of the black and 50 percent of the Hispanic adult populations will not have completed high school" (Southern Regional Education Board, 1989).

A range and a complex intermixing of variables affect whether or not minority children devote themselves to the

traditional American ideal of persevering through the school system as a means of attaining the good life. Bandura and Walters (1963) assert that role models for children are essential in influencing their norms and values. Before children can envision the possibility that they, too, can be successful, real life must provide children with examples of people very much like themselves being successful by following these norms and values following that model.

Numerous position statements assert the necessity for minority children having teachers and principals who are of similar backgrounds (Leonard, 1988; Grant and Gillette, 1987; Kirkness, 1986; Stewart, 1987; Webb, 1976; Sloan and Cunneen, 1982; Brooks, 1987; Cox, 1985). Further, researchers have compiled evidence that teacher expectations and role models affect minority achievement (see Vasquez, 1981; Fradd and Weismantel, 1989; Holtzman, 1985; for reviews of this literature). Singer and Garcia (1988) report that the lack of culturally appropriate role models for Hispanic adolescents is a factor that exacerbates the drug problem within that minority group.

Most research concerning the effects of principals on student achievement has avoided the question of whether the race of the principal affects students' performance (see review in Lomotey, 1989). The academic achievement of black children has never equalled that of their white peers (Coleman, et al, 1966; Jencks, et al, 1972; Marcus and Stickney, 1981, Adler, 1984; Stickney and Plunkett, 1983; Rist, 1973). Lomotey (1989) argues that the effective communication and interaction that

comes from cultural likeness should be a basis for assuming that black principals would be more attuned to the needs and possibilities of black students. He argues that the research showing that black teachers can positively affect the achievement of black students (Spady, 1973; Murnane, 1975; Greenleigh Associates, 1966) can be used to buttress the assumption that black principals will have the same effect.

Montiero (1977) reports that black principals place a higher priority on community involvement in schools, viewing parent and community involvement as essential to school success. Most importantly, Lomotey (1989) found that a common characteristic among the three black principals in his case studies was the demonstration of a clear "commitment to the education of African-American children, a compassion for, and understanding of, their students and of the communities in which they work, and a confidence in the ability of all African-American children to learn" (p.131).

Yet, fewer minorities are entering careers in education and occupying school leadership positions. Many enter by assignment to special projects with an unstated assumption that minorities should only supervise "their own kind". Such assignments are dead end career posts (Ortiz, 1982; Contreras, 1989).

When our schools' legitimacy is challenged and when an increasing minority population would logically lead to more minority access to leadership, there is no surge in percentages of minority educational leaders. This is disturbing, whether the argument is for equity, for representativeness, for role models,

or for an expanded vision of leadership, especially leadership that invites community and parent involvement.

## The Evident Values in the Dominant Reform Proposals

The dominant value pursued in state legislative education reforms in the 1980s is quality (Marshall, Mitchell, and Wirt, 1989). The National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration seeks to raise the quality of the training of school leaders, with few specific proposals for equity issues (Griffiths, Stout and Forsyth, 1989). The Holmes Group reforms make only vague statements about equity; the discussions about improving the teaching workforce went on without substantive involvement of black educators and without proposing measures to ensure minorities' access (Grant and Gillette, 1987). Those who have created and managed the national debates about the profession of education are leading us toward a future wherein the women and the best instructional leaders will continue to be cooled out when they seek leadership positions. Also, debaters have ignored one of the more obvious ways to encourage and support underachieving minority students when they fail to assertively recruit and promote minority educators as teachers and school leaders.

The system that has blocked the access to leadership to women and minorities has inadvertently provided us with a pool of educators with excellent potential as instructional leaders, attuned to community needs. We must use that resource.

## Reconceptualizing School Leadership

Active recruitment of women and minority school leaders is not only a step toward equity, but is also a giant leap toward structuring the schools systems to enhance instructional processes, opening access to parents and community members, and toward making schooling more meaningful to young people who are currently "at risk".

That recruitment, however, must not be done as a token gesture, putting individuals in positions to watch them struggle to meet old criteria of success and ancient stereotypes of leadership. We must seek expanded visions of leadership. The current recruitment, selection, training, and promotion processes have reified a version of leadership that has let down too many students, parents and teachers.

The legitimacy crisis in education will not be reduced merely by putting black faces and skirts on the same old kind of leadership. Only by eliminating narrow definitions of leadership and the selection processes that reify those definitions will we open access for women and minorities. Their leadership is more likely to demonstrate a way of structuring schools to enhance the teaching-learning process, to actively solicit the participation of parents and community members, and to create high expectations for each individual student, regardless of socioeconomic status, disability, or ethnic background.

Change. No change can be effected without recognizing the power of the current structure. Within a hierarchical power structure, the assumptions of those who hold power become governing principals, like constitutional premises for policy

(Sarason, 1982). Change cannot occur until those constitutional premises are changed, with concurrent change in the culture of the organization. One cannot expect people to lead schools in new ways until the organizational structures change. Weiler's (1989) and Ferguson's (1984) critique of bureaucracy, point out that it demands certain social acts, behaviors, motivations, values, and languages. To live in bureaucracies, people must conform. This presents a quandary for those (women and minority) administrative candidates whose voices have been submerged in bureaucracy. They may either overconform, knowing that they are tokens who are watched carefully, or they may present voices of resistance, ruining their chances to "fit in" (Kanter, 1977). To survive, women and minorities have to find creative adaptations to work as school leaders (Schein, 1978).

New definitions of leadership. Tyack and Hansot (1982), Callahan (1962) and Katz (1971) document the bureaucratization and professionalization of schooling leading to an adoption of the efficient business manager as the model for school leadership. This model does not work for schools if we assume that the fundamental goal of schools is the focus on the learning, nurturance and development of children. With that goal, one would expect leaders oriented to enhancing instruction, building communication with parents and community and developing a caring and mutually supportive environment. In this environment, children would be immersed in a cooperative system where adults promulgate expectations for their success and teachers and parents are included as valued resources in that endeavor. The authoritarian, bureaucracy-oriented manager whose

goal is to maintain discipline and hierarchical control over teachers does not work in establishing such a nurturant environment.

Foster (1986) advocates that we shed the myth that administration is apolitical management by neutral technocrats managing a pure bureaucracy that "poses as a democracy" (p. 113). Schools are places where values are contested, and leadership that merely stifles that conflict, banning its expression does not work for creating legitimacy and community support.

The assumption that women and minority candidates' failure to attain positions in administration is due to their deficient knowledge, networks, training and so on, has resulted in special training programs. However, when these programs train women and minorities to fit in to the administrative culture, they are, in fact, programming them to forget valuable attributes, qualities, and values. This does not work because intelligent, motivated educators are more likely to exit from the profession (Hirshman, 1970) rather than alter their identities to fit themselves into the white-male-normed definition of leadership.

Recommendations

We now have an opportunity to make major shifts toward equity and quality in school leadership. The following specific structural changes are essential to recruit larger numbers of women and minorities into school leadership:

1. community/staff development activities to train educators and their community to function with a de-bureaucratized model of organization including:

a. training incumbent and aspiring administrators to alter their values and language to demonstrate fit with an organization where teachers, parents and community members are valuable resources and the main task of leadership is coordination of resources to support the teaching-learning process;

2. critical analysis of all training, recruitment, selection and promotion processes to identify and change those that block access to minorities and women, sending clear consistent messages that these processes will reward instructional leaders who promote equity and elicit wide-based community support. New processes must deny access to those who cannot demonstrate instructional leadership capacities and values.

3. support and monitoring of the whole system of the educational administrative profession to ensure that women and minorities' access including:

   a. regional centers to conduct trend studies, to support class action lawsuits, to create processes for censoring schools and universities for failure to advance women and minorities, and to create networks to promote the candidacy of women and minorities (across county, regional, and state lines), to establish a formal network, with biannual hiring conferences, monthly newsletters, and to establish methods to assess districts',

professional associations', and universities' progress toward inclusion of women and minorities.

b. development of equity criteria and analysis of all educational administration-related organizations (e.g., UCEA, NASSP, AASA, and all university educational administration departments) to identify those who meet equity criteria, rewarding efforts in equalizing the participation and status of women professors and administrators and their progress in redesigning curricular and assessment programs to incorporate voices of women and minorities.

c. redesign of "assessment center" procedures to incorporate assessment of skills in the use of inclusive language, skills in establishing a nurturant environment, skills in generative leadership (Sagaria, 1988), and skills increasing equity in the school environment.

d. supporting a "women's locker room" or women's caucuses in university programs, districts, and professional associations as one method for legitimating women's voices, sharing dilemmas in creative adaptation, and for networking.

e. supporting minority group caucuses to buttress creative adaptations of minority aspirants in university, professional and district organizations.

f. requiring for all administrator certification and doctoral programs, a course that focuses entirely on race, ethnicity, class, and gender issues in schooling.

4. State-funding (with district matching funds) to provide fully-funded one-year scholarships to attend universities whose programs meet equity criteria (see above) for women and minorities who aspire to leadership.

Finally, no university program or school district should assert "we are an equal educational opportunity employer" without being able to demonstrate facts that show that women and minority educators are <u>in</u> positions of leadership and remuneration equal to that of majority males.

## Footnotes

[1]A 50 percent turnover in principals is projected in the next few years (Hogan and Zenke, 1986).

[2]The researchers caution that these percentages are based on incomplete data since not all states provided complete reports.

[3]Again the data were incomplete, but they are the best available.

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